Global Combat Supply Support - Marine Corps

Subject Area Logistics

EWS 2006

Global Combat Supply Support - Marine Corps
EWS Contemporary Issue Paper
Submitted by Captain H. H. Williams
to
Major D. R. Wright, CG 5
December 2005

maintaining the data needed, and c including suggestions for reducing	lection of information is estimated to ompleting and reviewing the collect this burden, to Washington Headqu uld be aware that notwithstanding an DMB control number.	ion of information. Send comments arters Services, Directorate for Info	s regarding this burden estimate ormation Operations and Reports	or any other aspect of the property of the pro	his collection of information, Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington
1. REPORT DATE DEC 2005		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2005 to 00-00-2005	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
Global Combat Supply Support - Marine Corps				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) United States Marine Corps, Command and Staff College, Marine Corps University, 2076 South Street, Marine Corps Combat Dev Command, Quantico, VA, 22134-5068				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAIL Approved for publ	LABILITY STATEMENT ic release; distributi	on unlimited			
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NO	TES				
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFIC	17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON		
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified	Same as Report (SAR)	13	THE STATE OF THE S

Report Documentation Page

Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188 Dwight Eisenhower illustrates the importance of logistics:

Throughout the struggle, it was in his logistic inability to maintain his armies in the field that the enemy's fatal weakness lay. Courage his forces had in full measure, but courage was not enough. Reinforcements failed to arrive, weapons, ammunition and food alike ran short, and the dearth of fuel caused their powers of tactical mobility to dwindle to the vanishing point. In the last stages of the campaign they could little more that wait for the Allied advance to sweep over them. 1

Dwight Eisenhower

Introduction

Lieutenant General Conway opened his lecture to The Expeditionary Warfighting School's class of 2006 by stating that "professionals think logistics." Meaning that the warfighter not only must focus on killing the enemy but he must focus on resupplying his men and their gear too. The current conflict in Iraq underscores the dire need for improvements to the way the Marine Corps supplies the warfighter at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. A universal, more timely, and accurate supply/logistics system is required to keep up with the operational tempo on an ever-evolving battlefield. The importance of and urgency for a more efficient logistical system is evident in support of the 33rd Commandant, Michael W. Hagee, who "fully support[s] the

implementation of Logistics Modernization through the Expeditionary

Force Deployment System (EFDS), enabled by Global Combat Support System

- Marine Corps (GCSS-MC)."³ In ALMAR 006/04, General Hagee directed all commanders to support GCSS-MC, "The implementation of which is critically needed today and without which we will not be able to support Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare and Seabasing in 2015."⁴ The inventors of GCSS-MC say that it can deliver even in these capricious times because GCSS-MC is far superior to the current system. Supporters say that GCSS-MC will provide the Marine Corps with capabilities that the other system can not so they feel it should be fielded right away.

History of USMC Supply Systems and GCSS-MC

One of the three Marine Corps' current supply systems, Supported Activity Supply System (SASSY) was created in the 1970's for use by Sears, Roebuck and Company and 3M. SASSY, which is mainframe based and requires local area network (LAN) connectivity, was designed for inventory control, accountability, requisitioning of supplies and management of fiscal data. The Marine Corps uses SASSY to interface with Marine Corps Integrated Maintenance System Automated Information System (MIMMS AIS), a system used to track maintenance; however, the interface was not complete and disparities exist between using unit data (the requesters) and the supporting activity data (the suppliers) due to poor connectivity. Aside from inaccurate data, SASSY is hard to learn and it is not user friendly. Unfortunately, the outdated 1970s

technology provided by SASSY does not efficiently support the warfighter in today's information age and the on the current battlefield. It requires LAN connectivity to facilitate communication between the using unit and supporting activity that is not always available while deployed.⁶

Over the last thirty years, attempts have been made to improve the capabilities and technology of previous supply management systems. In an effort to fully integrate supply, maintenance, and readiness into one system, the Asset Tracking, Logistics, and Supply System (ATLASS) was created and fielded in 1993, with the maintenance piece planned for integration by 1999. ATLASS is Windows-based and the connectivity requires phone lines, satellites or information can be simply transferred on a disk. However as with SASSY, ATLASS connectivity cannot be guaranteed while deployed, and therefore the transfer of data may or may not occur and supplies requested may or may not get ordered.

Once completely fielded in 1999, ATLASS was to be "an integrated supply and maintenance, client-server based application that will enable the Ground Logistics communities to do most of their work in ATLASS."

However, if a unit in a forward position needed supplies to complete their mission, the unit would order supplies and have to wait "never knowing when what they needed would arrive. Then they would probably reorder it, thinking there was a mistake, and then wasting time, money and extra supplies they did not need." Logisticians have become callous due to unfulfilled promises from SASSY and ATLASS; there is a

concern that GCSS-MC will not deliver the promised products. The Deputy Commandant for installation and logistics, Lieutenant General R. L. Kelly, addressed proper program management and ensuring that a vender will be selected that can and will deliver what they advertise. 9

Due to the current speed of information flow, time, money, and resources are more crucial now than ever and on today's battlefield, there is not time to wonder when or if re-supply will occur. Units need to have faith that they can place an order once and it will arrive in a timely manner. The goal of GCSS-MC is to "provide modern, deployable information technology (IT) tools for supported and supporting units to support LOGMOD. GCSS-MC will be based upon a recently completed Logistics Operational Architecture (LOA). This architecture drives the development of tools that will better integrate the current supply, logistics, distribution, and financial processes." 10 GCSS - MC can not be compared to SASSY or ATLASS; they are systems specific to the Marine Corps systems based out of Albany, GA. GCSS- MC belongs to the Department of Defense and will eventually support all of the branches services with compatible programs. It is an entirely new product with a new mission.

Based on after action reports from Operation Iraqi Freedom I (OIF I), Brigadier General E. G. Usher III states:

"The greatest shortfall was the lack of in-transit visibility information to incorporate into our command and control effort. The

FSSG had large, extended convoys moving hundreds of miles in unsecured terrain supporting Marine Forces spread across thousands of square miles in demanding weather conditions. The lack of visibility on unit stocks and in-transit visibility on ordered items made it difficult to identify actual shortages, to locate needed items with in stocks for reallocation, and to direct and track the movement of ordered items to requesting units." 11

Brigadier General Usher underscores the need to track ordered parts, quickly getting them to the requesting unit. Because units sometimes move frequently, this task is particularly difficult causing units to have to wait for the ordered parts to catch up with the unit.

The Way Forward

Some may argue that the time to implement a brand new logistics system is certainly not in the middle of a war, while others would argue that an upgrade is long overdue and the future is uncertain, so there is no time like the present. GCSS-MC is but the foundation for the Marine Corps' overall focus on Logistics Modernization (LOGMOD). LOGMOD is focused on modernizing systems and tools to best support the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Commander so he can utilize his force most efficiently. LOGMOD and therefore GCSS - MC implementation is being pushed at the highest level in the Marine Corps and "The program's importance is either above or at least on the same level with weapons systems we have coming down the road . . . MV-22, Joint Strike Fighter

and Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle."¹² This is a new concept; the timing is right, the funding is right, and the means to accomplish the upgrade are present. The Marine Corps must maintain focus and work through implementation and not resort to the outdated systems of the 1970's.

GCSS-MC will initially be fielded at the II Marine Expeditionary

Force (MEF) geographic region and then followed by implementation at III

MEF and, finally, at I MEF. A Transition Task Force comprised of

Marines, civilians, and contractors will work with subject matter

experts (SMEs) at each region to field GCSS-MC. ¹³ Regional training and

on-site support will be available at each MEF following the six month

fielding process. ¹⁴ The goal is to have the initial fielding of GCSS-MC

at II MEF by spring 2007. In order to integrate GCSS-MC the following

actions must be complete: integration of the Marine Air Ground Task

Force (MAGTF) architecture with the GCSS-MC architecture, realignment of

maintenance from five echelons to three, redefine Logistics command and

control bandwidth, and redefine supply battalion (Bn) and maintenance Bn

processes and organization.

Conclusion

The current supply system utilized by the Marine Corps is antiquated. In order to keep the Marine Corps current with technology and keep the warfighter supplied on the front lines a new method of support and logistics is paramount. GCSS-MC is built to support in a deployed environment, as well as in garrison. "GCSS-MC provides us with the desperately needed technical enabler. But this is only the first of

many steps. Without process and organizational reform we will only accelerate the old processes and organizational behavior and never capitalize on the art of the possible in terms of performance, scheduling, and cost." 15

Although GCSS-MC has not yet been fielded throughout the Marine Corps, it is evident that it packs a bigger punch and is far more capable than the dilapidated systems currently in place. GCSS-MC is a universal, more timely and accurate supply/logistics accountability system that has the ability to keep up with today's ever-evolving battlefield. GCSS-MC is designed to deliver, even in these erratic times.

Word Count: 1532

Notes

1. United States Marine Corps, MCDP 4: Logistics (Washington D.C: Department of the Navy, 1997), 1.

Lieutenant General James T. Conway, Lecture to Expeditionary Warfare School Class of 2006, 28 October 2005.

- 3. General M. W. Hagee, Commandant Marine Corps, "Marine Corps Logsistics Modernization," ALMAR 006/04 [electronic message board] [cited 9 November 2005]. Available from usmc.mil; INTERNET. Cited hereafter as Hagee.
 - 4. Hagee, 1.
- 5. Lieutenant Colonel Bill Parker, interviewed by Captain Hilary Williams, Expeditionary Warfare School. United States Marine Corps 21 October 2005.
- 6. Captain Todd McAllister, Supported Activity Supply System, http://www.fas.org/irp/program/99compv10.htm (12 Nov 2005).
- 7. Captain Thomas Schwab, Asset Tracking, Logistics, and Supply System, http://www.fas.org/irp/program/99compv10.htm (12 Nov 2005).
- 8. Lance Corporal Kevin Hacker, "New Global Combat Service Support System renders predecessors obsolete." The Globe, 13 October 2005.
- 9. Testimony of Brigadier General Edward G. Usher III, Director Logistics Plans, Policies, Strategic Mobility, United States Marine Corps, 3.
 - 10. Marine Corps Concepts and Programs 2004, 66.
- 11. Sandra I. Erwin, "War Experience Provides Rational For Marine Corps Logistics Reform," National Defense, July 2004, 63.
- 12. Richard R. Kelly, "Logistics Modernization: A Marine Corps Warfighting Imperative, Marine Corps Gazette, August 2004, 16.
- 13. United States Marine Corps, Global Combat Support System Marine Corps, (GCSS-MC): System Integration, Statement of Objectives, 06 December 2004, 53.

- 14. Jon Hull, Richard Stauffer, "From Vision to Implementation," Marine Corps Gazette, August 2005, 24.
- 15. Richard L. Kelly, "Excellence In Logistics Supporting Excellence in Warfighting," Marine Corps Gazette, August 2003, 14.

Bibliography

- Brill, Arthur P. III "Marine Corps Plans to Revamp Outmoded Logistics System." Seapower, April 2004.
- Chandler, John. "The Courage to Change." Marine Corps Gazette, August 2004, 24-26.
- Conway, Lieutenant General James T. Lecture to Expeditionary Warfare School Class of 2006, (28 Oct 2005).
- Delarm, Randy L. Ronald Eckert. "GCSS-MC." Marine Corps Gazette, August 2005, 20-23.
- Erwin, Sandra I. "War Experience Provides Rational For Marine Corps Logistics Reform." National Defense, July 2004.
- Hacker, Lance Corporal Kevin. "New Global Combat Service Support System renders predecessors obsolete." The Globe, 13 October 2005.
- Hagee, General M. W. Commandant Marine Corps, "Marine Corps
 Logsistics Modernization." ALMAR 006/04 [electronic
 message board]. Available from http://www.usmc.mil (02
 Feb, 2004) 1.
- Hull, Jon, Stauffer, Richard. "From Vision to Implementation."

 Marine Corps Gazette, August 2005, 23-24.
- Kelly, Richard L. "Excellence in Logistics Supporting Excellence in Warfighting." Marine Corps Gazette, August 2003, 14.
- Kelly, Richard L. "Logistics Modernization: A Marine Corps Warfighting Imperative." Marine Corps Gazette, August 2004, 16, 18, 20.
- Kelly, Richard L. "Logistics Modernization: Lethality and Effectiveness." Marine Corps Gazette, August 2005, 16-18.
- Marine Corps Concepts and Programs 2004, 66-67.

- McAllister, Captain Todd. "Supported Activity Supply System." http://www.fas.org/irp/program/99compv10.htm (12 Nov 2005).
- Parker, Lieutenant Colonel Bill. Interviewed by Captain Hilary Williams, Expeditionary Warfare School. United States Marine Corps, 21 October 2005.
- Schwab, Captain Thomas. "Asset Tracking, Logistics, and Supply System." http://www.fas.org/irp/program/99compv10.htm (12 Nov 2005).
- Thompson, Julian. The Lifeblood of War, Logistics in Armed Conflict.
 United Kingdom: Brassey's, 1991.
- Thorpe, George C. *Pure Logistics*. Washington D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1986.
- United States Marine Corps, Global Combat Support System Marine Corps, (GCSS-MC): System Integration, Statement of Objectives. 06 December 2004, 53-57.
- United States Marine Corps, MCDP 4: Logistics. Washington D.C: Department of the Navy, 1997, 1.
- Testimony of Brigadier General Edward G. Usher III, Director Logistics Plans, Policies, Strategic Mobility, United States Marine Corps.
- Van Creveld, Martin. Supplying War, Logistics from Wallenstein to Patton. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

- ¹ United States Marine Corps, MCDP 4: Logistics (Washington D.C: Department of the Navy, 1997), 1.
- ² Lieutenant General James T. Conway, Lecture to Expeditionary Warfare School Class of 2006, date
- ³ Commandant Marine Corps, "Marine Corps Logsistics Modernization," ALMAR 006/04 [electronic message board] [cited 9 November 2005]. Available from usmc.mil; INTERNET
- ⁴ Commandant Marine Corps, "Marine Corps Logsistics Modernization," ALMAR 006/04 [electronic message board] [cited 9 November 2005]. Available from usmc.mil; INTERNET
- ⁵ Lieutenant Colonel Bill Parker, interviewed by Captain Hilary Williams, Expeditionary Warfare School. United States Marine Corps 21 October 2005.
 - 6 ACDS printout Capt Todd McAllister
 - ⁷ ACDS printout CPT Thomas Schwab
- ⁴ New Global Combat Support System renders predecessors obsolete.

⁹ War Experience Provides Rational for Marine Corps Logisitics Reform

 $^{^{10}}$ Warfighting Concepts, Emerging Capabilities, and Initatives article.

¹¹ House Armed Services Committee Gen Usher

¹² Gen Hagee CMC Article K Logistics modernization: A Marine Corps Warfighting Imperative

¹³ From vision to implementation article

¹⁴ GCSS-MC Operational Requirements Document (binder)

¹⁵ Excellence in logistics supporting excellence inwarfighting